

MACAULAY'S USE OF AUTHORITIES

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Dutch and Spanish ambassadors in England for the same period, selections from the correspondence of the English ambassador in Paris between 1680 and 1688, and copies of the letters of William III to his confidants Bentinck and Heinsius. It was almost a complete collection of the materials necessary for writing the history of James II's reign, so far as they were supplied by the foreign archives accessible at that time, but the materials it afforded for the reign of William III were much smaller in quantity and by no means so complete. Thanks to this collection Macaulay, so far as the reign of James II is concerned, was spared much of the labour which ordinary historians have to do. He was not obliged to pay the long visits to foreign libraries and record offices which Froude and Gardiner had to undertake, and this saved time, toil, and money. He did supplement the material Mackintosh had collected for the reign of James II, but only slightly. For the reign of William III Mackintosh's materials were not sufficient: Macaulay had to research in foreign archives on his own account, and his narrative of that period naturally took a longer time to write. It cannot be too often repeated that the most original part of his History is the part relating to the reign of William III. The reign of James II was

much better known : the reign of William III was comparatively untrodden ground, and at the same time It was much more difficult. England became the head of a great coalition and played a leading instead of a subordinate part in European politics. Thus the field Macaulay had to deal with grew wider, and the sources he had to consult in writing the history of William's policy grew more numerous. Owing to what may be termed the international position of William, and the fact that England, after being the stage on which European parties fought